

# August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

## Idea Gathering Stage

# Public Input Summary



Missouri Department of Conservation  
November 2014



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is seeking public input as we develop and revise conservation area management plans.
- The August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area is a 6,987-acre area containing 3,000 acres of forest in addition to grassland, cropland, old fields, prairie, and wetlands. The area also has 28 fishable lakes and ponds totaling 550 acres. It is one of nearly 1,000 conservation areas owned or managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Conservation areas support the Department's mission by offering places to restore and conserve fish, forest, and wildlife resources, and providing opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources. Conservation areas are different than state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on team sports, recreational activities, or social gatherings.
- MDC conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (October 1-31, 2014) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 10-year management plan for Busch Memorial Conservation Area.
- During this time period (October 1-31, 2014), we heard comments from 22 respondents.
- Four attendees participated in the Busch Conservation Area Open House on October 14, 2014.
- Common themes heard during this idea gathering stage included comments regarding field trials, suggestions to improve fishing, requests to allow canoes/kayaks, and general appreciation for the area.
- The Busch Memorial Conservation Area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year area management plan. The draft plan will be available online (likely spring 2015) for a month-long comment period at [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

## INTRODUCTION

### **Public Comment on Conservation Area Management Plans**

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. MDC is in the multi-year process of updating management plans for conservation areas and invites public comments. To preview draft management plans and share comments online, visit [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

MDC conservation areas cover almost one million public acres for the purpose of restoring and conserving forest, fish and wildlife resources, and for providing opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources. Most Missourians are within a 30-minute drive of an MDC conservation area.

Missourians care about conservation and use conservation areas for many different reasons. These areas help people discover nature through various activities, and help make Missouri a great place to hunt, fish, and enjoy other outdoor activities. We want to know how conservation areas are important to Missourians. Encouraging public comments on Conservation Area Management Plans is part of MDC's ongoing efforts of working for and with Missourians to sustain healthy forests, fish and wildlife.

Conservation Area Management Plans focus on natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. The plans do not address regulations on hunting, fishing and other area uses, which are set by the Conservation Commission and enforced under the Wildlife Code of Missouri. MDC will consider all ideas received and will work to balance the issues and interests identified with the responsibility of managing areas for the present and future benefits to forest, fish, wildlife, and people. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into area plans and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of MDC staff.

Questions? Please contact MDC Public Involvement Coordinator Amy Buechler at 573-522-4115 x3252, or [amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov).

### **August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area**

The August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area was purchased by the Missouri Department of Conservation in 1947 from the federal government. Mrs. August A. Busch, Sr. donated a portion (\$70,000) of the cost toward the purchase of the area as a memorial to her late husband.

The Department encourages recreational use of the area by the public, while furnishing fish and wildlife with the resources necessary to be healthy and abundant. We encourage you to walk the hiking trails, drive the auto tour, photograph the wildlife or simply sit under a tree and enjoy the sights and sounds of the outdoors.

Fishing and hunting for a variety of species is allowed on the area. Special regulations exist for most of the fishing and hunting activities, please check the Area Regulations section or with the office for current regulations.

Portions of the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area were used by the Department of Army in the 1940s for TNT and DNT production and by the Atomic Energy Commission in the 1960s for uranium ore processing. The affected portions were all part of a federal environmental cleanup project and required to meet certain environmental health and safety standards. The area is now considered to be safe for all recreational pursuits allowed on the area, as well as the fish and wildlife found within the area. To find out more about the history of these activities on the area, you can visit the Weldon Spring Site Interpretive Center located at 7295 Highway 94 South, St. Charles, MO 63304.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (October 1-31, 2014) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 10-year management plan for Busch Memorial Conservation Area. The plan, once drafted, will be posted online ([mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans)) for further public comment.

## **Public Involvement**

The idea gathering phase for development of the Busch Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan ran from October 1-31, 2014. The objective of this phase was to inform stakeholders about the area planning process and ask them to share their ideas.

Staff communicated about the idea gathering stage by:

- Information and online comment form available at [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).
- News release posted on Department website and sent to local media outlets.
- Flyers posted on bulletin boards throughout the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area.
- Flyers posted and comment sheets displayed at the St. Louis Regional office.
- Sent mail and email to: non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local government offices, partner groups, local Field Trial clubs.
- Sent announcement to Area Plans email list (2,800 people).
- Hosted Busch Conservation Area Open House (October 14, 2014; 4:00-7:00 p.m.).

## **Next steps**

The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year management plan for Busch Memorial Conservation Area. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely spring 2015) for a month-long comment period at [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans). After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

### Who responded?

Table 1. Total number of respondents commenting during the idea gathering phase (May 1-31, 2014) by respondent category.

Organization Type	Count
<b>Individual citizens</b> (no affiliation listed)	18
<b>Field trial organizations</b> (Golden Retriever Club of Greater St. Louis, Retriever Training Forum)	2
<b>Horseback riding organizations</b> (Show-me Missouri Backcountry Horsemen)	1
<b>County government</b> (St. Charles County Parks)	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>

### How they responded

Table 2. Total number of each response received.

Response Type	Count
Web Comment Form	19
Hard Copy Comment Form	2
Email	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>

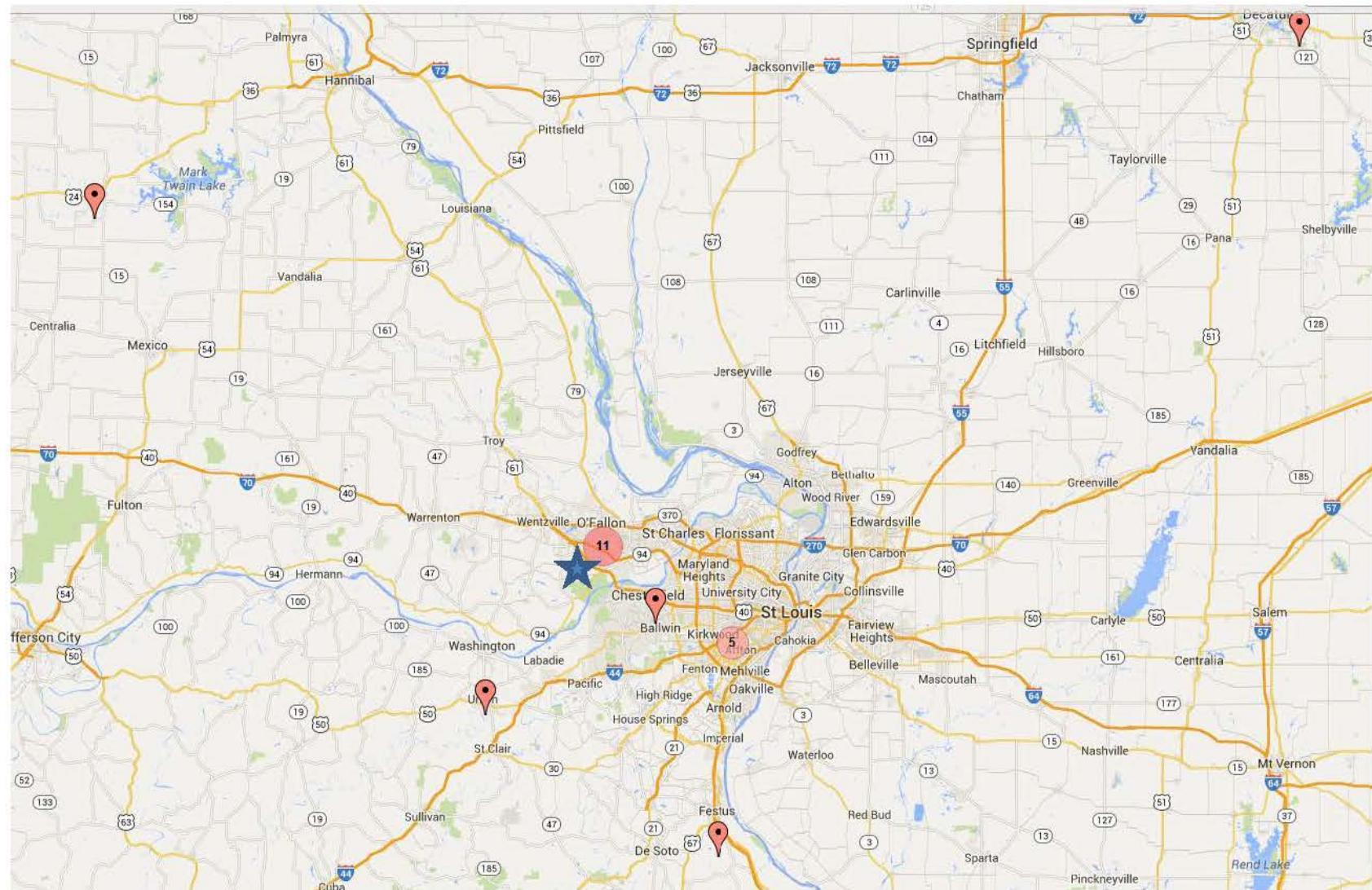
### Where respondents are from

Table 3. Total number of responses categorized by each respondent's location.

State	Count	Percent
Missouri	21	95%
Illinois	1	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Map of respondent locations by zip code.** = Busch Memorial Conservation Area

The pinpoints below represent the central point of zip codes from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers show multiple responses from a geographic area.



## BUSCH OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

### August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area Open House

St. Louis Regional Office

Tuesday, October 14 (4:00-7:00 p.m.)

- 4 attendees
- 0 comments submitted, although all had good conversation with staff.
- All attendees indicated they were involved with dog trials.
- Open house occurred at the same time as a Cardinals game and weather was rainy and cold – both of which may have contributed to low attendance.



## THEMES AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH BUSCH CONSERVATION AREA IDEA GATHERING PHASE (October 1-31, 2014)

The Busch Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage was available for a public idea gathering period October 1 – 31, 2014. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from 22 respondents. A brief summary of public input themes can be found below. The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year management plan for August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely spring 2015) for a month-long comment period at [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans). After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

### Terrestrial Resource Management

- Suggests improving habitat for small game (especially quail).
- Suggests row cropping more fields for wildlife.
- Suggests thinning out bushes, trees between Lake 34 and road/parking area.
- Suggests increasing wetland habitat.

### Aquatic Resource Management

- Suggests a lake devoted to larger catfish (with larger size and smaller possession limits).
- Concern that Lake 34 is becoming overgrown with water lilies.
- Suggests a slot limit for largemouth bass on some lakes.
- Suggests allowing limit of more than 10 sunfish on some lakes.
- Suggests increasing minimum size limit of crappie on some lakes.
- Suggests expanding well-stocked “kids only” fishing areas.
- Suggests future bank stabilization using Geo-Web or synthetic turf instead of large rocks to prevent injury to dogs.

### Public Use Management

#### Field Trials

- Concern that area has declined in quality for field trials. Concern that dog trial areas have become overgrown and have erosion issues.
- Concern that area is not safe for field trials due to car traffic.
- Suggests that area should be dedicated solely to field trials for a portion of the year.
- Suggests that area be promoted and managed as a national destination for field trials.
- Appreciates staff cooperation and recent improvements in field trial areas.
- Suggests consulting with field trial community before changing management of field trial lakes, fields, and crops.

#### Boats

- Suggests allowing non-motorized boats (canoes, kayaks) or small boats with electric motors on lakes.
- Suggests requiring a small fee to register and use private boats.

#### Trails

- Suggests additional hiking and biking trails.
- Suggests adding a trail dedicated to motorized off-road vehicles. Charge fee to use this trail.
- Opposes allowing motorized off-road vehicles on area.
- Suggests developing a multi-use trail network on Busch in the northwest portion of area and offers to help plan, layout, install and maintain these trails. If necessary, close multi-use trail during hunting seasons.

#### Roads

- Concern that roads are closed and gated on Busch area.
- Suggests dust mitigation plan and/or paving at least some of area roads.
- Suggests building other entrances to area to reduce traffic and dust.
- Concern that visitors don't obey speed limits.

#### Amenities

- Concern that building was closed when respondent visited.

#### Hunting

- Suggests allowing fewer deer hunters and fewer managed hunts to allow deer population to rebuild.
- Suggests limiting number of dove hunters for safety reasons.

#### Administrative Considerations

- Suggests allowing evening access for astronomers.
- Appreciates this area for wildlife photography, hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, field trials and other uses. Appreciates knowledgeable staff.

**“Wordle” visual summary created from all comments received. Prominently displayed words were used the most frequently in public comments.**



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Busch Conservation Area Open House and Share Your Comments Flier



#### **How are conservation areas important to you?**

The Missouri Department of Conservation is updating management plans for our almost 1,000 conservation areas and we want your comments.

#### **Open House for public input on the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area**

**Tuesday, October 14 from 4-7 p.m.  
2360 Highway D, St. Charles**

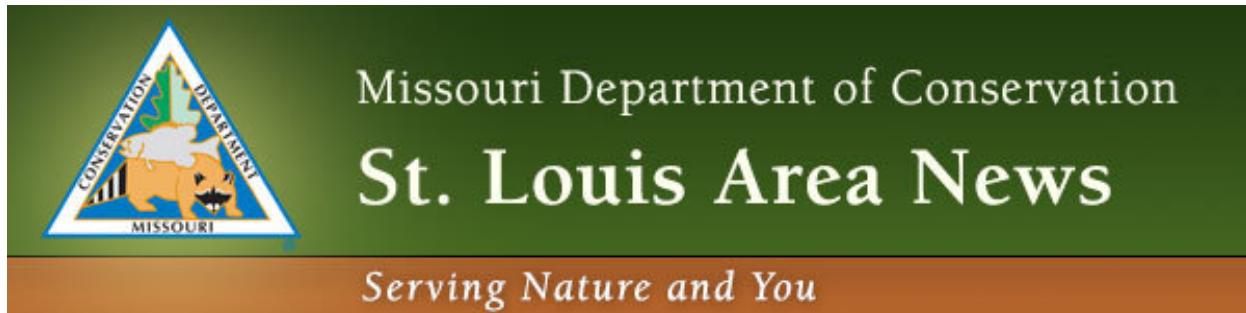
MDC is inviting public comment regarding the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area in St. Charles County to aid staff in developing a 10-year management plan for the area. Interested persons or groups—including recreational users, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials and government agencies—are invited to offer input during the Open House, or online throughout the month of October at the website listed below.

#### **Comment period closes**

**October 31, 2014** 



**Appendix 2. Busch Conservation Area Open House and Share Your Comments Press Release**



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Dan Zarlenga**

Media Specialist

636-300-1953 ext. 4112

Dan.Zarlenga@mdc.mo.gov

For immediate release:

**Public invited to share ideas on future management of August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area online and at Open House Oct. 14**

St. Charles, Mo.—The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. MDC is in the multi-year process of updating management plans for conservation areas and invites public comments. The August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area in St. Charles County is among the areas under review.

MDC is inviting public comment at the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area to aid staff in developing a 10-year management plan for the area. Interested persons or groups are invited to bring their ideas to an open house Tuesday, Oct. 14 from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. These include recreational users, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials and government agencies.

The open house will take place on the area at the MDC St. Louis Regional Office located at 2360 Highway D in St. Charles.

The public is also invited to view the proposed management plan at [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans) and [share ideas online](#). The plan will include a link for supplying comments and input.

The plan will remain available for public comment during the entire month of October. The public comment period for the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area plan will close Oct. 31, 2014.

To reach August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area, from Interstate 64 take Highway 94 south to Route D in St. Charles County. Then travel west 1.5 miles to the area. More information about the open house is available by calling 636-441-4554.

This 6,987-acre August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area contains 3,000 acres of forest in addition to grassland, cropland, old fields, prairie, and wetlands. Facilities/features include: boat rentals, picnic areas, pavilion, hiking trails, 43 fishing jetties, fishing docks, staffed firearms range, archery range, five viewing blinds, and a visitor center. The area also has 28 fishable lakes and ponds totaling 550 acres.

Conservation Area Management Plans focus on natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. The plans do not address regulations on hunting, fishing and other area uses, which are set by the Conservation Commission and enforced under the Wildlife Code of Missouri. MDC will consider all ideas received and will work to balance the issues and interests identified with the responsibility of managing areas for the present and future benefits to forest, fish, wildlife, and people.

Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the area plan and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of MDC staff in conjunction with the City of Kirkwood Park Board.

MDC conservation areas cover almost one million public acres for the purpose of restoring and conserving forest, fish and wildlife resources, and for providing opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources. Most Missourians are within a 30-minute drive of an MDC conservation area.



Lake 33 is the largest lake on the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area. The 10-year management plan for the area, located in St. Charles County, is under review now through October 31. MDC welcomes public feedback at an Open House on the area Tuesday, Oct. 14 from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m., or by going to [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

## Appendix 3. Busch Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Info Sheet

# Share your ideas about August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

**The August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area is beginning to develop an area management plan for the next 10 years. We welcome your comments!**



*Serving nature and you®*

This 6,987-acre area contains 3,000 acres of forest in addition to grassland, cropland, old fields, prairie, and wetlands. The area also has 28 fishable lakes and ponds totaling 550 acres.

It is one of nearly 1,000 conservation areas owned or managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Conservation areas support the Department's mission by offering places to restore and conserve fish, forest, and wildlife resources, and providing opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources. Conservation areas are different than state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on team sports, recreational activities, or social gatherings.

### **What's a Conservation Area Management Plan?**

These plans document strategies for natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. Conservation area plans also help communicate an area's purpose and management direction to staff and interested citizens. Area management plans serve as a management plan for the property with a focus on terrestrial and aquatic resource management, public use management, and administrative considerations.

Missouri Department of Conservation staff will begin drafting the 10-year August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan later this year, which will be available for an additional public comment period in coming months.

### **Why do you want my ideas now?**

This fall, we are working to gather ideas to help inform us when developing our draft area management plan. We would love to hear from visitors who care about and use the August A. Busch Memorial Wildlife Area.

**Questions?** Contact Amy Buechler, [amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov), 573-522-4115 x3252.

**Comment online at [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans) or mail comments to: Amy Buechler, MDC, Policy Coordination, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Comment period closes October 31.**

## Appendix 4. Busch Conservation Area Open House Comment Form



# How is the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area important to you?

## Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes, I want to receive e-mail updates about the Busch Area Plan.
- Yes, I want to receive e-mail updates about other conservation area plans.

Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

## Your ideas



The August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area is beginning to develop an area management plan for the next 10 years. To help inform this effort, we welcome your ideas about the management of Busch Memorial Conservation Area!

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(Continued on back)

**Thank you for your comments!** We hope to hear from a broad range of public interests and will listen and consider all ideas. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the conservation area plan and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, available financial and staffing resources, the best role of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of Department staff.

**Leave in comment box or mail to:** Amy Buechler, MDC, Policy Coordination, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102 (postmark by October 31). You can also comment online at [mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://mdc.mo.gov/areaplans). Comment period closes October 31.

**Appendix 5. Comments received during Busch Memorial Idea Gathering Phase (October 1-31, 2014).**

improve habitat to be more small game friendly especially quail .Even if it could never be opened for quail hunting it would be nice to showcase the habitat needed for quail and it would be a great place to train dogs

Disappointed to see the continuing closing and gating of roadways in the Busch area. If the 4x4 "bubbies" doing damage is the reason, arrest them; it's that simple. Thanks!

Mr. August Bush was instrumental in the area being acquired and set up as a dog trial area. It could have easily turned into an industrial park like the UM area across Hwy 94. With his help it turned into one of the preeminent trial venues in the nation. Due to the complaints of a few and the lack of knowledge of its history it no longer is. That is due to the area not being safe due to the auto traffic.

I believe that the grounds should have a set aside period of the year for its original purpose and promoted as a destination, similar to the World Shooting Complex in Sparta, Illinois.

I was at Busch Wildlife area today from 11:00am to 12:30pm. I hope the new plans include having the visitors center open as it was closed when I was there.

You need to select less hunters for your deer hunting programs and also take away a couple of the deer management seasons. You guys have depleted the deer population in the area due to you guys over hunting the Busch Wildlife Conservation Area for the last 15 years! Plus you need to start row cropping more of your fields again, if you would row crop more of your CRP fields and not harvest the crops it would serve a purpose for the wild life. And start having a drawing on the opening day of your dove season in the mornings, to many people jam packed in your fields! Very dangerous and can't believe you guys haven't realized it!

I know this is minor but I think it would be nice if non motorized vessels (canoes and kayaks) were allowed on the lakes. I know most are small enough you don't need a boat but it would be great on some of the bigger ones.

Also, it seems like there are a lot of catfish in the stocked lakes around the same size. Maybe one of the lakes could be devoted to larger fish and have a larger size and smaller possession limit.

1. The area around the "top" of Lake 34 is becoming overgrown with water lilies. Can you reduce the number of water lily plants? Also, same area, the area between the road/parking area and the lake could use some "thinning out" of the bushes, trees, etc. similar to what was done on lake 22 and lake 23.

2. I think a long term dust mitigation plan would improve the quality of enjoyment for visitors to the area. Pave at least part of the road leading to lake 33. Pave at least part of the road

leading to lake 34/35. If that is not economically feasible, build another entrance to the area, using one of the access roads off of Highway D. Using the authorized vehicle access road that is by lake 21 would reduce the traffic between the entrance and lake 21, thus reducing the amount of dust raised by vehicles during dry conditions. Or, possibly build another entrance down towards lake 28. If none of that is possible, at least invest in a water truck which could be used to water the roads occasionally during a dry spell, thus reducing the amount of dust.

3. Impose a slot limit on lake 31 temporarily, so the bass that are in there will have a chance to grow without so much competition. I know it is catch and release, and I think that may be causing small bass conditions—too many fish in the lake competing for limited resources.

More hiking & biking trails are always a good idea. Maybe set up a plan for this area as well as others so astronomers could be allowed evening access. I know if it is open late that often there are people who do not respect the area causing problems. None the less something could be worked out. I know there are many lakes, but could wetland habitat be increased?

I believe this area could be opened up to motorized off road vehicles with a dedicated trail system as well as open riding areas for new riders and children to learn the hobby of motorcycling / ATV trail riding.

Many of these areas are under utilized and while wildlife conservation is a major motivation, opening the area to off road vehicles would draw many more citizens into these areas and motivate more to get involved outdoors.

Many outdoors folks have grown up recreationally riding and we often travel outside the county for reasonable riding areas.

The fees for usage would actually be a revenue generator and put these often unvisited areas to good use.

I am a wildlife photographer and visited this refuge in late Summer. I plan to return in the fall. I love the ability to drive at my own pace and stop when I spot wildlife / birds. One of my favorite CA's in MO. I wish there were more like it. I also wish more visitors would observe the speed limit.

Continue and expand youth related activities, such as fishing lessons. Expand "kids only" fishing areas and stock more aggressively to ensure positive "first time fishing" experiences for kids.

Hard copy (10/3/2014) - I like the area.

Hard copy (10/3/2014) - You guys did great!!!

The Busch Memorial CA continues to be one of the strongest and well managed natural resources in the State of Missouri. On a personal level as a local resident and user, the balance of managed hunting and fishing activities, along with the more passive pursuits of bird/animal

watching, hiking, and bicycling is tremendous. At all times of the year, I see more and more people enjoying all of the above mentioned activities. I would hope the focus for use/management remains to a large extent, the same. Definitely, more trails would be terrific, and restricted use with no motorized vehicles (ATV's/motor bikes) allowed. Equestrians are interesting---horses are okay, its just the uneducated riders that tear up areas when its wet, muddy, or thawing that need to be restricted.....I don't have any good thoughts on how to do that....

From the perspective of a county agency that deals with a lot of resource management issues, it is a tremendous help to have the expertise locally that the regional office at Busch provides. The staff is extremely knowledgeable, credible and professional in their approach.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment-

Busch Conservation Area is 1 of a handful of conservation areas in the state that allow dog field trials. It was once one of the premier areas in the US for holding retriever events and hosted the National Retriever Club Championship event many times as well as other national events. The last NRC event held here was in 2006 and left because of the lack of attention to the fields and lakes. Infrequent mowing of the fields during the growing season allowed woody growth to overtake a lot of the fields which when mowed left dangerous stems for the dogs. Most of the lakes that permitted dog use were allowed to become overgrown near the edges which made them virtually unusable. Several of the fields have erosion problems which are hazardous to the dogs. On the bright side local management has been very cooperative in addressing these issues and have promised to continue with the improvements. But we all know that priorities change in a short period of time. It is my hope that the improvements will continue and the area can once again become a premier site for national events. The dog trialing community realizes that the area is under tremendous pressure from all users due to its proximity to a major urban area, but we feel that the first priority for the area should be conservation measures which hunting dogs are a large part of.

Continue the work that you have undertaken to restore the Busch Area. The Area had been neglected for so long, and became so over-grown that was impossible to use for many activities. Most dog training/trialing activities that had taken place at Busch historically had been driven away due to the lack of maintenance. Work to restore Busch as a world-class destination for dog activities. These activities, and the improvements that need to be made are complimentary to other users of a multi-use area and yet will draw people from all over the country to use the Area for training and competitions which will also bring tourism dollars to the area. It is a shame that there is a beautiful stables building and kennel runs that go unused because the Area has become unusable.

An example of a similar wildlife area that is well managed is the West Kentucky Wildlife Area. It has some type of dog event on it almost every weekend, yet is still open and usable for hiking, hunting, fishing while helping to fill the local hotels and restaurants with users from outside the Paducah, KY area.

I ran a retriever field trial this past weekend at Busch WMA. It was put on by the Mississippi Valley Retriever Club. I spend a good bit of time talking with Jeff Saladin who works with the staff at your facility to put together maintenance planning for the use of retriever trainers and trailers.

The area was the best I've seen it in years for retriever-friendly work. I was there for the National Open in 2006 or so and I know the area got grown up with heavy weeds and such and became less retriever friendly. I see a huge improvement and I thank you sincerely for putting some resources into the maintenance of retriever-friendly land and water for dog training and trialing.

There are many ways to accomplish bank stabilization on the ponds and lake without using the large rocks that present a danger to dogs when training or running events. As ponds are re-done please consider using a safer means of erosion control such as Geo-Web ([www.prestogeocom](http://www.prestogeocom)) or synthetic turf, which can be repurposed from athletic fields (look at a company called "repurposedMaterials" online). You can see an article regarding how this is done at [http://geosyntheticsmagazine.com/articles/1014\\_f3\\_wakeboard\\_syntheticturf.html](http://geosyntheticsmagazine.com/articles/1014_f3_wakeboard_syntheticturf.html).

Consult with members of the dog clubs as listed with your office before placing new structure for fish.

Continue to work with the dog community concerning the maintenance of fields and the rotation of crops.

1 - allow slot limit harvest of largemouth bass on lakes with a sufficient population -- for example, 3 fish daily of 10" - 14" and ONE 18" or greater on Lake 35 This could be done on a lake by lake season by season basis

2- allow more than 10 sunfish harvest on some lakes - maybe a 15 or 20 daily limit with a 6" minimum size

3 - allow use of private small boats with electric motors or paddles on days when rentals are not available (rainy in season and "off season" spring and fall) These boats must be registered and a nominal fee paid (maybe \$25.00/year).

4 - Use a minimum size limit of 8" or 9" for crappie on lakes with sufficient numbers and growth rates to support such

Lake 8 is now designated as a dog training area. It appears that it has been abandoned - it's not mowed and really doesn't have the facilities that dog trainers seem to like [as does lake 30 and 11]. Any plans to develop 8 as a true training area?

August A. Busch Memorial CA is, in many ways, the premier facility for residents of the St. Louis Area to experience the outdoors. While there are several public areas in the Greater St. Louis Area that offer equestrian opportunities there are also many horses and avid trail riders—riders willing to help install and maintain trails and associated infrastructure. Show Me

Missouri Back Country Horsemen want to encourage MDC to develop a multi-use trail network on Busch utilizing a combination of existing access routes and constructed trails in the relatively undeveloped, northwest portion of the 6,987 acre CA. SMMBCH offers to partner with the Department to plan, layout, install and maintain a trail network.

We recognize the high use of Busch by the public for hunting, fishing, outdoor education, and other nature activities. It is important, for safety reasons, to insulate the urban public from horses and riders. The relative concentration of the developed portion in the central, eastern and southern portions of the CA lends well to maintaining separation by placing most multi-use trails in the northwest portion—north of Dardenne Creek and north and west of Kraut Run Creek.

We also recognize and appreciate the heavy use of Busch by urban hunters during some seasons, so we recognize that it may be prudent to close the area to multi-use during parts of the hunting seasons.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Email: For the retrieving breeds of dogs, the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area has become a mecca known countrywide. Since the 1950s hundreds of retriever field trials have been held on the Area and the National Retriever Championship has been hosted twenty times on the property.

As the Missouri Department of Conservation staff plans for the next decade we ask that you include our needs in that planning. We are indeed grateful for the major efforts that have recently been made to improve condition at specific lakes and fields on our behalf. We would ask that you include in your plans provisions to extend such improvements to replace those lost in the last decade when fields were returned to native grass with a plan to leave them in that state. Those areas were lost to our use without previous notice and have severely limited our ability to present events with the variety of the past.

Those of us in the retriever sport have appreciated the efforts of the Missouri Department of Conservation and we hope we can continue to work in harmony to keep the Busch Area as the country's prime field trial location.